

BRANCHING OUT

Creating Connections to End Sexual Violence

Spring 2010

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7th Annual Take Back the Night April 22nd 5:00-7:00

By Terri DeWalt



Did you know that you probably talked to someone today who has been a victim of sexual assault? Maybe it was a family member, a friend, or a cashier at a convenience store. If not today, then at some point in your life, you have met someone who has dealt with the pain of sexual abuse. You might not know this about them; they might not ever tell you. However, we know that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 12 men will be a victim of sexual assault at some point in their lives, which means that whether or not we are aware of it, we interact with survivors of sexual assault every day.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. In honor of the month, SAS will be hosting Racine County's 7th Annual Take Back the Night (TBTN) on April 22nd 2010, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. The event will begin at 5:00 at the Racine Public Library (75 Seventh St. Racine, 53403) and end with refreshments, music, and awareness displays at Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church (625 College Ave. Racine, 53403).

The goal of Take Back The Night is to bring awareness to sexual assault within our community and to give power back to sexual assault survivors and their allies. The event is free and open to all community members. Community leaders Sammy Rangel and Judy Hartig-Osanka will be speaking at the event. The Stars of Courage Project, which represents every survivor Sexual Assault Services has worked with over the past eleven years, will be on display at the Racine Public Library. The Clothesline Project, a collection of t-shirts created by survivors and support people, will be on display at Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church. Food, refreshments, and music will be provided. SAS is grateful to the Racine Public Library and the Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church for their partnership in providing this event.

This is the seventh year SAS has provided a Take Back the Night event in Racine County. If you have not attended in past years, I would especially encourage you to join us this year. Use this opportunity to show your support of the victims of sexual assault in our community.

If you are interested in attending or volunteering at Take Back the Night, and have questions, please contact us at 262-619-1634 or email me at terri.dewalt@lsswis.org.

— Terri

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Legislative Update

By Vicki Biehn

I am pleased to announce that there are quite a few items to update you on for this newsletter. The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA) and the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV) have been very busy during this legislative session working to improve the lives of sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking victims in our state. As of our last newsletter, the following are bills that were in the process of becoming law in Wisconsin. Many of them are now laws in the state of Wisconsin.

The Victim Fair Housing Act – AB277/SB204 is a bill that bars discrimination in housing matters due to status as a victim of sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking. This bill was passed by both houses of legislature and was signed by the Governor and is now the law in Wisconsin.

The Lock Out Abuser Act – AB400/SB274 has passed both houses and the Governor signed the bill on February 11th. This bill requires landlords to change locks or allow a victim to change locks within 48 hours of victim request. The victim must prove victim status by providing legal documentation of the abuse such as a copy of a restraining order, criminal complaint or condition of release.

The Child Victims Act – AB453/SB319 removes the statute of limitations in civil cases for child sexual assault victims. The current statute of limitations is when the victim reaches the age of 35. This bill creates a 3-year “window of opportunity” to bring a civil case for those currently barred from doing so because of the current statute of limitations. This bill has passed out of the Assembly committee and is awaiting action by the full Assembly and Senate committee action.

The Victim Privacy Act – AB419 is a bill that creates Civil Rape Shield in Wisconsin. The bill will prohibit evidence of prior sexual conduct of the victim in civil cases with narrow exceptions. This bill will also prohibit a court from ordering a victim to submit to a mental examination to assess her/his credibility as a condition of allowing the victim to testify and generally prohibits a criminal defendant from requiring a victim to submit to pretrial interview or deposition. This bill also makes any personally identifiable information about the victim in Crime Victim Compensation or SAFE fund applications confidential and not a public record. This bill has passed in both houses and the Governor signed the bill into law on March 3, 2010.

The Video Voyeurism Act – AB411/SB281 bill provides judges with the option to require defendants to register as a sex offender if the crime was “sexually motivated.” Both houses have passed this bill and the Governor signed it on March 3, 2010.

The Healthy Youth Act – AB458/SB324 bill requires school districts that offer sex education programming to provide comprehensive pro-

gramming, not limited to abstinence only education. The programming must be medically accurate, age appropriate, and address healthy relationships. The programming must also identify counseling, medical and legal resources for survivors of sexual assault and dating violence. This bill has passed both houses and the Governor signed it into law on February 24, 2010.

The Gender Violence Act – AB480/SB 337 is a bill that would create a civil cause of action for acts of violence motivated by the gender of the victim. Currently, a three-year statute of limitations exists for bringing such claims as a personal injury suit – a short window of opportunity for many survivors of sexual assault. This bill would create the distinct civil cause of action and importantly includes a longer statute of limitations – seven years. This bill has been passed in the full Assembly and by the relevant Senate committee – it is only awaiting a vote by the full Senate and signature of the Governor. The WCASA policy specialist expects this bill to be passed by the end of this legislative year.

Penalty Enhancer/Gender-Motivated Crimes – AB 481/SB 344 is a bill that would add gender to the state’s hate crime statute. For those violent crimes in which the perpetrator was motivated by the gender of the victim, prosecutors would have the opportunity to charge accordingly and seek a penalty enhancer. This bill has been passed in the full Assembly and by the relevant Senate committee – it is only awaiting a vote by the full Senate and signature of the Governor. The WCASA policy specialist also expects this bill to be passed by the end of this legislative year.

If you wish to become more informed and involved with the legislative agenda from WCASA or WCADV please contact Ian Henderson at ianh@wcasa.org or Tony Gibart at tonyg@wcadv.org and ask to be added to the action alert list. When you are added to this list, you will receive e-mails that alert you when action is needed on your part. Usually, you will be asked to call or e-mail your representative and ask them to support or not support a certain bill. The action that you are asked to do usually only takes a couple of minutes. I always feel empowered and energized when I take these actions.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to give me a call at 262-763-6226 ext 31 or vbiehn@lsswis.org.

— Vicki



Please feel free to copy and display the Take Back the Night flyer on the facing page at your agency or place of business. We appreciate your support and hope you will join us for this community event! →

7th Annual
TAKE BACK THE NIGHT



Take a stand against sexual violence!

Support those who have been sexually assaulted!

Join Us To End Sexual Violence

Thursday, April 22nd 2010

5:00-7:00 pm

Start at: Racine Public Library

75 Seventh Street Racine WI 53403
Speakers & Survivor Speak Out
Stars of Courage

Candle Lit March

End at: Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church

625 College Avenue Racine WI 53403
Food & Refreshments
Clothesline Project

Brought to you by

SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES

Racine Office
1220 Mound Ave. Suite 304
Racine, WI 53404

Burlington Office
487 S. Pine St.
Burlington, WI 53105

In partnership with:

**The Racine Public Library &
Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church**

For more information call: (262) 619-1634 or visit: www.sasoflss.org





Helping Hands

By Katy Adler

In the past, you have probably read about our Volunteer Advocates answering the 24-hour crisis line and responding to the hospital to provide support to sexual assault survivors. This is the main role of volunteers within Sexual Assault Services. However, volunteers may also support the program as Volunteer Legal Advocates. Anyone who provides legal advocacy at SAS goes through the training required to become a Volunteer Advocate (a 15-hour training spread out over a few days), and then also receives information on the criminal justice system and how to track court activity.

When attending a hearing for a sexual assault case, a Volunteer Legal Advocate will track a variety of information, including:

- Any motion brought forth by the prosecutor or defense attorney, and the judge's decision on the motion.
- Information on plea deals that are offered to the defendant, including lesser charges, dropped charges, etc.
- At sentencing: recommendations of the prosecutor, defense attorney, pre-sentence investigation (PSI) report, and final sentencing decision of the judge.
- Information on whether a victim impact statement was given to the court either through a letter, or in person by the victim, or a family member of the victim.
- Outcomes of hearings, including status conferences, motion hearings, plea hearings, etc.
- In cases where charges are dismissed, the reason for dismissal.

A Volunteer Legal Advocate may also provide advocacy directly to victims by supporting a victim during preliminary hearings, trials, sentencings, or any hearing that the victim wishes to attend. A Volunteer Legal Advocate can also attend hearings that a victim may not wish to attend, and later inform the victim on the outcome of the hearing. In this capacity, Advocates work alongside the Racine County Victim/Witness office, an office which also provides information and support to sexual assault victims. SAS staff members and volunteers provide an added layer of advocacy, ensuring that victims receive all the information and support they need.

Volunteer Legal Advocates can be incredibly helpful in providing legal advocacy and tracking court activity. At times, there are a number of hearings that SAS staff are unable to attend, and having volunteers help in these areas ensures that not only do victims receive the support they need, but also that important information can be tracked on sexual assault cases in Racine.

A goal of having Volunteer Legal Advocates track court activity is to gather information on how sexual offenders are sentenced, and how the cases have proceeded through the court system.

If you, or someone you know, would like more information about how to become a Volunteer Legal Advocate, please ask them to email kadler28@lsswis.org or call (262) 619-1634.

— Katy

SAS Wish List

- Volunteer Advocates!
- Gift cards/certificates from Target, Office Depot, grocery stores or other discount stores
- Courage to Heal book series
- New clothes for victims at the hospital (t-shirts, sweat pants, underwear, etc.)
- Gift bags filled with body lotions & shower gels to be given to victims at the hospital
- Candy for counseling clients
- Bottled water or a water cooler to be used for counseling clients and during volunteer trainings

Call For Submissions...



If you are a survivor or you know a survivor who would like to submit a poem, short story, artwork or editorial for publication in this newsletter, please email it to Samantha Sustachek (ssustachek@lsswis.org).



Volunteer Training

Would you like to join the SAS team of Volunteer Advocates? Do you know of someone who would make a great volunteer? If so, we have an opportunity coming up very soon!



SAS is currently recruiting community members for our next training. Sessions are tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, May 5th from 5:00-8:30 p.m., Saturday, May 8th from 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., and Wednesday, May 12th from 5:00-8:30 p.m.



For more information or to sign up for the training, please contact Katy Adler at 262-619-1634 Ext. 18 or kadler28@lsswis.org.



Family Advocate

By Samantha Sustacheck

The time after a child discloses abuse is often very stressful for all involved. The child, as well as the people who care about the child, are dealing with the emotional turmoil of the incident, the investigation, and a disruption to their normal life and schedule.

As difficult as all of this can be for a child, a disclosure of child abuse and the aftermath is just as difficult to deal with (if not more so) for the parents or caregivers of that child. While caregivers will often do everything in their power to help children cope with abuse, they often overlook their own well-being.

Luckily many stress relievers work for both children and adults, so children dealing with abuse and the adults who care about them can learn to cope together. Read on to discover some of these helpful activities.

Creativity: When was the last time you got out a box of crayons and created something beautiful? Kids and adults alike can benefit from a creative outlet for their feelings. Draw it (or paint it or sculpt it) out together! Or write your feelings down in a journal. Kids who are too young to write can get in on the action too by keeping a picture journal to illustrate their feelings.

Exercise: Get out of the house and go for a walk or a bike ride. Play at the park. Or stay in and practice yoga. Exercise is a natural mood booster, and if you choose to get out of the house for your exercise, you will enjoy the added benefit of spending time with nature. Exercise can help you achieve a healthy body and a healthy mind. It helps adults and kids alike to forget about their worries and frustrations, if only for a little while.

Simple Pleasures: Blow bubbles and let your kids chase them and pop them. Enjoy some music, either by listening to something relaxing, singing along to favorite songs, or putting on something fun and upbeat and dancing around the living room with your kids. Take some time to do nothing but relax. Enjoy the sunshine while finding shapes in the clouds or enjoy a good book in front of a cozy fire.

Playing With Pets: Animal companions are proven stress relievers. Whether you are playing fetch with a dog, petting a cat, or watching fish swim in an aquarium, you are taking your mind off of your troubles. And as an added bonus, pets help teach kids about the importance of caring for someone else.

Gardening: Digging in the dirt can be therapeutic. You can garden outside in your yard or grow plants to beautify the inside of your home. On top of being a stress reliever, gardening is educational for children as they observe seeds growing into plants.

Social Support: Never underestimate the power of the company of others. Adults and children alike need a network of supportive friends and family members. Nurture these relationships, and draw on them in times of stress.

Practicing one or more of these activities together can help reduce stress in abused children and their caregivers. Everyone involved will be able to heal more quickly when everyone's feelings are addressed and everyone's emotional needs are met. This includes the feelings and needs of the child, as well as those of the adults who care about that child.

These tips were adapted from the About.com Stress Management section. See http://stress.about.com/od/parentsunderstress/a/stress_kids.htm for the complete article.

— Sam



SAS Fourth Quarter Statistics October—December 2009

Crisis Line Calls.....	48
Racine Hospital Visits.....	15
Burlington Hospital Visits.....	3
Legal Advocacy Sessions.....	28
New Counseling Clients.....	23
Counseling Sessions.....	136
Community Presentations.....	19
CAC Appointments.....	30



SAS First Quarter Statistics January—March 2010

Crisis Line Calls.....	32
Racine Hospital Visits.....	15
Burlington Hospital Visits.....	1
Legal Advocacy Sessions.....	45
New Counseling Clients.....	38
Counseling Sessions.....	179
Community Presentations.....	25
CAC Appointments.....	48



Sexual Assault Services
1220 Mound Ave., Suite 304
Racine, WI 53404

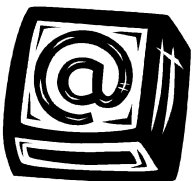
Contact Us!

SAS Racine Office
1220 Mound Ave. Suite 304
Racine, WI 53404
262-619-1634

SAS Burlington Office
480 S. Pine St.
Burlington, WI 53105
262-763-6226 Ext. 31

24 Hour Crisis Line: 262-637-SAFE (7233)

Stay Connected!



Join our News and Events email update list! Would you like to receive information on upcoming SAS events and volunteer opportunities? Email Samantha Sustachek at ssustachek@lsswis.org with "SAS news and events" in the subject line and she will include you in all SAS news and events related emails.

Sexual Assault Services seeks to create a safe and compassionate environment to help promote the healing of sexual assault survivors and their support people.

